

Set in leather.

A Discourse

# Vppon a Question

of the Estate of this  
time.

France

*Why does not the R become a Catholic*

Faithfully translated out  
of French by E. A.



*Wm  
Baker*

L O N D O N

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EXHIBITION

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1753





## A question of this time.

*Why doth not the King become a Catholike? If he would become a Catholike, his realme would soone be at peace: all his subiectes would obey him, and without any difficultie acknowledge him.*

This is the daily speeche of diuers: but let vs consider whether it be not of persons as farre different in humours, as they differ in intents.



When the leaguers began to doubt of the good successe of their affaires, to mistrust their owne forces, and to imagine, that in the end, the King might become maister, they gaue out, that it was requisite he should become a Catholike, alleadging, that afterwarde on such assurance as they might gather, that he meant good earnest, they would acknowledge him to be their King, supposing, that if they must needs grow to that passe, that of necessitie they must obey him; they would at the least perswade and make the simple people (whome they had abused) to beleue that their first stirring up of these commotions and troubles of war, tended only to the preservation of the Cathol. Apostol. Romish religion, and the Kings conuersion. But these speeches would much better haue beseeemed the mouths of other Catholikes that did continue in their duties, then theirs: for they are for to remember, that the late deceased King was as great a catholike as any of his predecessours, and yet was it hee whome the Leaguers did first set vpon, against him directed they their first exclamations, injuries, and reproches, in his life time began they their conspiracies, rebellions, and disobedience: against his person and estate did they so farre attempt,

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Attempt, as with the aduise of the most apparant professors of Romish religion among them, to deliberate, consult of, and conclude his death, whom finally most barbarously and horribly they stroke and slew through a Iacobine Friar, who was by them induced and brought thereto.

The same Leaguers are also to remember, that by their writings and diffamatory Libelles printed and published at such time as they thought the K. that now is to be overthrown a past hope of euer attaining to the succession of this Crown, they proclaimed him a relaps, aduowing, that albeit he would returne into the bosome of the catholike Church, yet he was no longer receivable to the succession of the Crowne, and so consequently his subiectes were dispensed with for acknowledging him or yelding him anie obedience: yea this they caused to be preached abroad by the hired tongues of their preachers. Many other such speeches and writings of the same Authors coulde I here alleadge to reprove and conuince them of contradiction, and so to shew them to be nothing lesse then ledde with so holy a desire of the kings conuersion, were it the Argument of this Discourse: but being content with this litle, which in respect of them, I haue but touched by the way, I will indeuour to answer and satisfie others that doe vse the same speech, albeit with other affection and meaning then they.

Among sundry that giue themselves out to be the Kings seruants, we daily heare no other speeches but these: Would to God the King would become a Catholike: That he would vouchsafe so much content to the Catholikes, as to go to make: so shoulde the Leaguers no longer haue any cloke for their rebellien, the Crownes that they holde shoulde yelde him obedience: and to be brieft, we shoulde obtaine peace, that is so necessary to this realme.

My maisters, sith you are the Kings seruants, or at the least, that you do so terme your selues, and that it seemes, besides your own sayings, that you would haue vs beleue you so to be: I dare presume that you will hearken to my reasons, and accept of them with a milde and upright mind: for how free soeuer I be in my words, yet do I meane to say nothing that may be offensive vnto you.

I pray you, my maisters, these wishes and desires, together  
with



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With such zealous sighs as seeme to proceede from your stomaks, do they simply growe of a holy affection to the wealth and peace of Gods Church and this realme, and the saluation of the King, or rather of some affected shew, then of any true essence of good will: I am content to take them in the first sense, which is the best, and to believe that sincerely you are of opinion, that if the King would speedely, without tarrying untill a Councell hath determined the controuersies that at this day raigne throughout christendome about the diuersities of opinions, concerning the Cath. Apost. and Romish religion, yelde himselfe to bee instructed in the Catholike religion, his realme would immediately grow to peace, and all factions and partialities amongst vs cease.

I would to God that that were the onely let, and in so holy a desire wil I neuer giue place to any. Besides, I am assured, that the King is so ready to learne, that he will easely be content to be instructed and brought to the Cath. Apost. Romish religion, in case any man can shew and proue him to be in any error: yet, may I tell you, that this remedy is not sufficient to cure our diseases. Do you believe, that the Leaguers doe in heart desire that the King would be brought to the Cath. Apost. Romish religion? If you do so thinke, you are deceived. They saie me to desire it, but they would be very soze it should be so, yea, albeit the King had done it, yet would they yelde him no more obedience then they now do, but rather they would vse his returne to the Cath. Church as a meane to seuer the Germans, Switzers, and other protestant nations from the Kings friendship, and so bring him to lose al credit and reputation both within and without the realme: a matter which great princes do continue according as they are thought of, and are in effect constant, couragious and stedfast in their good purposes. Marke therefore this one onely matter among many other of like pollicy, which now I thinke meete to shew you, soz so may you discover the trueth of these their speeches.

The chiefe of the League, and among others the D. of Lorraine, perceiving one of the kings chiefeest humane forces to consist in the succour that he expecteth from the Germanes, fearing

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nothing



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nothing so much as the discent of an army of that nation, haue by their agents and factors giuen to vnderstand to the princes Electors, and other lords and potentates of Germany, that the King was become, or at the least had sworne and promised the officers of the crowne and French nobility, that he would become a Catholike: That already both about his person, and in his principall and most important affaires within the realme and without, he vsed almost none but Catholikes. Which to be so, sayde they, mark what they be whom he hath sent to be dealers in the leauy of such Souldiours as he desireth of you: be they not all Catholikes? Yea, even the same Ministers and Ambassadors whome the late King vsed: What occasion therefore haue your Lordships to grant your succor to the king of Navarre (for they do not otherwise entitle the King) rather then vnto the house of Lorraine and Guise, or to the King of Spaine their king and confederate? With this sleight and subtilty haue they troubled the Kings affaires in Germany, and slacked the leauy of his men of war. What then would they do if indeede the king were become a Catholike, considering that vpon a simple apparance only they haue so shaken the amity which the princes of Germany do beare to the king: Hereupon therefore ye may conclude, that al the instance that the leaguers make, to cause the K. to returne to the Catholike religion, tends only to withdraw from him the loue of forren protestant Princes, so to weaken his forces of so much. Also that albeit he were become a Cath. yet the King of Spaine, with the houses of Lorraine and Guise, and other his enemies, would neuerthelesse prosecute the warre against him, and that with more power and strength then yet they haue: for vndoubtedly they would vse the power of Germany & other the protestants that now do assist the king in the defence of his successiue and lawfull right to this crowne, which they indeuour to wrest from him, and al other the princes of his blood and familie.

This is the cause that the King (being well informed of the drifts and practises aforesaide, hath dispatched the L. Vicount of Turenne to the Quene of England, and thence into Germany, to assure the protestant Princes of the contrarie of that that his enemies haue byuited among them to his hindrance, and to shewe



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He shew them that it was no newes that he vsed the seruice of catholiks, considering he had the like befoze he came to this crown, Also, that he intended equally to fauour and vse all his obedient seruants and subiects without acception or difference of religion: with assurance likewise to the saide Lady the Queene of England and protestant princes of Germany, that at what time soeuer he shal cause himselfe to be instructed in the catholike religion, he will withall procure to al chriſtendome the benefite of re-union in one sole faith and religion, thereby at once to cease all diuisions, warres and partialities arising vpon the diuersitie of opinions in religion. Let vs therefore, I pray you, a little examine what may bring to all chriſtendome in generall, and particularly to this realme, the accomplishment of your desires.

It were some what if the king were instructed and brought to the cath. Apost. and Romish religion, and with all my heart my selfe do wish it as earnestly as any of you, yet must you with me confesse, that albeit we might reap the contentment of the sight hereof, yet his subiectes that are indued with the like opinion, would not neuerthelesse be so soone reclaimed: witnes Cassiodorus who in the person of Theodorike king of the Gothes dooth say: Religion dependeth not vpon our commaundement, for no man is forced to beleue against his will: witnes also S. Bernard, who in another place saith: Faith must be perswaded, not forced, whereby these two great personages doe freely confesse, that kings haue no power ouer the consciences: besides that, nothing should be so voluntary as religion, wherein, if the spirit be forced, it may wel be said, that religion is taken away, and there is none at all left. And indeed we haue found that our kings how zealous catholikes soeuer, could not in threescore yeares space neither by their examples of earnest Catho. Apost. and Romish religion, neyther by fires, tortures or temporall weapons tame or force the consciences of their subiects. To what purpose then were it for the king to be a catholike, vnlesse his protestant subiects would so become also: I do already seme to heare some cry out saying: we would perswade, yea, even force the king to denounce war against them, vnlesse they would con- forme themselves. Alas, so should we returne into that where-



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out ye seeke to depart. You say, The king becoming a catho-  
like, we shal be at peace: yet in your other discourse you see, that  
creeeping out of one war, we shall fall into another as dangerous,  
or rather worse then the former. Let vs then crie alarum as  
much as we list, for that is no cure for our calamities: weapons  
prouoke weapons, and our minds only are sicke, which we must  
seeke to cure by documents and reasons onely. Thus much for  
the particularity of this realme.

Shall the generall state of christendome be any whit the bet-  
ter? Is the king more able to reduce forren protestant Nations  
to the cath. apost. Romish religion? There wil be no want of  
firebrands of war to tel me with their vsuall discourses: That  
the king who is a great warriour, may with the assistance of the  
croyne and forces of our holy father the Pope, and the King of  
Spaine, in fewe yeares reduce the foraine people and Nations  
into the bosome of the Romish church. Such discourses are much  
amisse, as experience of that which is past teacheth vs: for so  
should we reenter into such a labyrinth, as without other more  
milde and lawfull meanes, and Gods great helpe, we shall not  
easily get out againe: yea, so should we fall to turning of an in-  
finite wheele, able to leade vs and all christendome to a finall de-  
struction.

Moreouer, ye are to thinke, that it were very vnseemely to  
the inuiolable faith of the king, to his constancie, inuincible  
magnimitie, honour and reputation, so sleightly and sodaine-  
ly to alter his religion, whether in hope of a more peaceable  
raigne, or in intent to force and racke consciences, and in all ex-  
tremitie to leaue war against those that haue assisted him in all  
his aduersities, and against whome we are to imagine, that he  
beareth no bad minde, Alth himselfe being in the like case hath  
felt, that euen in his soule, he thought it good. Which also is the  
cause, that he iudging others affection to religion by his owne,  
will not force the consciences of vs catholikes, and woulde you  
then that he should force the protestants? Judge ye whether it  
were any reason. Do we meane to play with the k. and make  
him in his actions (which ought to be kept in measure and com-  
passe) walke after our fantasies: Let vs at this time be content  
with



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With his declarations published both before & since his coming to this crowne, which haue relation hereto, and doe open to vs his resolution.

I haue peradventure more briefly then I shoulde, or then the matter deserves, touched such inconueniences as are to be feared, or may come to passe, in case the king should reclaime himselfe to the cathol. religion as readily as some doe desire: but because by this little that I haue said, others may easily supply such considerations as may be conceived in this behalfe, which I leaue to the discretion of those that list more deeply to penetrate therein, I wil proceede to intreat of the profit and commoditie that may rebound to al christendome, so long as the king standeth fast in the declarations which he hath published both before and since his coming to the crowne, for matter of conscience and religion, wherein he alwayes submitted him selfe to the determination of a generall or nationall counsell.

The king is not alone in this realme of his religion, there are but ouer many instructed therein, that do professe the same. Neither in this realme alone are there many withdrawn from the Romish Church, but also in England, Scotland, Denmarke, Sweden, Poleland, Germany, Switzerland, and other places, being more then halfe christendome. What way therfore do ye thinke to be best to reclaime al these nations to the obedience of the cath. apost. Romish church, whether war, or a free generall counsell: Inquisitions, fires, gibbets, murders, warres, battels, siege of townes, leagues, conuenticles, slaughters, assaults, poisonings: in brieft, all other meanes and subtilties in the worlde, that these 30. yerres could be practised to the great desolation and detriment of al christendome, but especially of this realme, haue as yet nothing preuailed. Only they haue made a number of Atheists, Libertines and Epicures, contemners of God, his word, and church: we haue found these medicines to be no fitter to the cure of the sickness of the mind, then is a strong, cleane, and summing wine to the frantike or burning ague: but rather to resemble oile to quench a flaming fire: or as when a man hath paine in his arme, for the curing therof to cut off his leg, or other member. By maisters, the Apostles and antient fathers of the Church



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Neuer vsed any such toles for the rooting out of those errors and heresies which from time to time were sown and planted therein. Marke in the Acts of the Apostles what they did in the beginning, in the cutting off of meats, and abolishing of Judaism which some though the circumcision went about to continue in the church, after grace given by Jesus Christ. Consider what the Emperour Constantine the great did for the suppression and condemning of the heresie of Arius. See also what other Emperours did in like cases, what course they tooke to abolish the heresies of the Nestorians, Pelagians, Anabaptists, and others, as the Counsellors called for the same do testifie. Why then shall not we do the like in these dayes, where the question concerneth not a handfull of people retired from the Romish church, but even halfe christendome?

But now here commeth some angrie fellow that will tell me, that the heresies of these dayes are already condemned by the council of Trent: and therefore, if that a proccesse already iudged even by decree, where all parties have answered reciprocally, is not to be reduced to the file, what shall then become of a proccesse iudged by default, and contumacie, where the parties have neither appeared nor answered? But omitting all other causes of nullitie alledged against the said Council, as by sundry bookes expressly written both appeare: the Protestants and Huguenots do say and complaine that they are not heard in the said council of Trent. That albeit they were thereto summoned and called, yet they durst not appeare, as doubting of the safety of their persons, by reason of a certaine principle both then, and yet holden by some of our divines, importing, That faith is not to be kept with heretikes: and fearing the like successe as happened to those, who contrarie to the publike faith, and the Emperour Sigismundes safeconduct, were put to death at the council of Constance. If we were once sufficiently grounded to condemn this opinion and error, may we not be so againe? It is not the first time that there have bene diuers councils holden for the rooting out of one selfe heresie. With there have bene two Councils holden in Italie, and one Synode in France, for the determining of the opinion of a meane Deacon of Saint Maurice of Angiers, is it not greater reason to call a ge-  
nerall



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Herall free councell for so many peoples and nations of Christendome, as at this day are of diuers opinions: Let vs then shewe that we feare not the touchstone: yea, let them know that equitie and trueth are on our side, which can neuer be reuerfed in the presence of God, who by his holy spirite alwaies assisteth a free councel lawfully assembled and holden.

I could be content here to make a digression and exclamation against our holy fathers the Popes, who are or should be the common fathers of all faithfull and Catholike people, for suffering so much christian blood to be shed about these arguments and controuersies in religion: also, for that they haue rather fauoured, allowed, and consented to the leuying of such wars hereabout, then vsed the spirituall sword, the which is Gods word, for the cutting off of the course of heresie: but in respect of the reuerence of their memorie: the place that they haue holden, the honor that I owe to that holy sea, and eschewing of offence, I will holde my peace.

I say therefore, that as this sickenes of diuersitie of opinions in religion is spirituall, so it is requisite thereto to applie spiritual remedies and medicines. To say with some, that the king is to be instructed, we may say as much of al other that holde the same opinions as he doth, and so when shal we haue done teaching of euery one particularly: Againe, thinke you so to win the consent of the inhabitants of England, Scotland, Denmarke, Sweden, Germany, and other countries that haue free exercise of their religion without controlement: Wene you that the doctours of Sorbonne, and other such diuines shall be welcome to them in particular, when they come to minister vnto them this foode and instruction: We are deceiued: it is a mere mockerie, neither can that be the necessarie remedy to this disease. Nothing but a generall councell can cure so generall a sickenesse. For the honour of God therefore, my Maisters, you that are seruantes to God and the king, as well Cleargie men as others, neuer withstand this course. And you of the League, let reason rule you, as well your affaires are but in bad case: I say and affirme, that vnto such as in lieu of employing themselves about the calling of a generall councel, shall withstand and hinder the same, we may iustly attribute the causes of whatsoeuer damage may ensue to the catho.



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Apostol. and Romish religion, aduowning that they be guilty and answerable before god for al the robberies, murders, fires, spoils, ransoms, violacions, ruines, calamities, and other outrages, and excesse of the warres. I know well enough, my maisters, that many of you do wish that the king would become a catholike, to the end ye might haue peace, and ye desire peace to the end to returne to your houses, there to inioy your wonted commodities and pleasures. But if ye obtaine not this wish at Gods hand, ye may be well assured, that (as in a certaine place it is saide) it is because ye aske amisse. God knoweth your hearts, and can answer you as Christ answered the sommes of Zebede, Ye wot not what ye aske: Let vs first therefore aske and seeke after the kingdome of God and his righteousnes, so shall all things be added thereto. For I do certainly beleue that the first point requisite hereto, were to change and reforme our maners, our pride, vanitie, couetousnes, ambition and pleasures, with other our sins and bad demeanors, and to embrace charitie with the lone of God and our neighboꝝ, which at this day are not onely cooled, but euen almost quite quenched in vs. But sith I am no diuine, without grounding my selfe any deeper vpon diuinity, I will ende this discourse in the same simple stile wherein I began.

A hundred and a hundred times, considering the spoiles and desolations proceeding of the tragedies stirred vp throughout Christendome, but especially in this realme, vnder the pretence of diversity of opinions in matter of religion, I haue studied how they might be appeased, yet still my minde hath giuen me, and I haue thought it good (vnder Gods good pleasure, who only is able to free vs from these miseries) for some mighty christian prince, touched with the spirite of God, a loueꝝ of his owne saluation, together with the peace and vniõ of the vniuersall Church, whose worde and faith had neuer bene called in question, to labour to the pope, emperour, and other christian kings and princes, to summon an assembly in maner of a councell, or generall conference, whereto it might be lawfull for al christian nations to send their embassadors, deputies, doctours and diuines, men of milde and tractable humours, such as especially respected the glory of God, the saluation of themselves and their neighbours, and the peace of all christendome,



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Wendeme, to the ende, by the testimony and authority of the holy scriptures, the auncient counceles, the doctours and fathers of the church, such as haue alwayes bene receiued and allowed, to agree and conclude vpon a publike and general confession of faith, that may touch whatsoeuer is in controuersie, or diuersly interpreted concerning the catholike apostolike and Romish doctrine and religion, as also that euery the saide embassadours and deputies should be authoized with especial power and prorie sufficient to grant, promise and sweare in the behalfe of those that might haue chosen, and sent them, to obserue and keepe, and religiously and inuiolably to cause to be obserued and kept, whatsoeuer shall be decided, concluded and decreed in the saide assembly. And withal reuoluing in my mind who were the fittest prince in christendome, whom god might vse as an instrument in so great a worke, my heart gaue me aboue 8. yeares since, that the king now raigning temporally ouer vs, was most meete: yea, and euer since haue I bin perswaded, that god stil preserved him to that end. In which perswasion I am greatly confirmed, when priuately I call to mind Gods wonderfull works, in the calling and bringing him to this crown. For it hath bin marvellous yea, I would gladly say euen miraculous, had not euery one seene it, or had not many particularities bene noted in sundry former writings: either if I will, that among the kings seruants (for to them specially do I direct my speech) there were any yet so dull, as not to haue considered, and diuers times meditated vpon the course of things passed, I could gladly stay vpon a brieue rehearsall of the same in this place: but studying for breuitie, least I should be tedious, I will onely say thus much: that sith so extraordinarily, contrary to the opinion and expectation of a great parte, and against the willes of many French men, and some mighty foren enemies, GOD hath raised vp, and placed in the seate royal, him whome they reiected and proclaymed vnworthy, I am fully and stedfastly resolved, that he hath called and chosen him, not only to raigne ouer this realme, but also to be the meane of peace and vniou throughout the catho. apostolike and Romish church, and to rote out all schismes, diuisions & abuses, that may haue bin crept in or nourished through the corruption of the time.



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Which foundation once laid, I will with Saint Paule adde thus much, that such as do resist the kings dominion ouer this realme, do resist the ordinance of God, and so purchase to themselves eternall damnation: and therefore to the end to appease Gods wrath, all the subiects of this crowne ought to vnite themselves in one will, to acknowledge and obey the king, that so we may attaine to a peace, whereby things decayed may be redressed, small ones increased, iustice flourish, and order, which by wars is subuerted and corrupted, be restored in all estates and functions, and finally the king, at the humble suite of his good and faithfull subiectes may deale with the saide Pope, Emperour, and other kings and Princes christian, for the assembling and gathering of a generall free councell, wherein to abolish and end all controuersies, and to refoyme whatsoeuer is any where corrupted or amisse in matter of religion.

He thinkes that already I heare a common consent of all nations christian, to hearken to this so necessary a motion: yea, that I even heare them say, that sith the king is the dealer, and that the generall councell shall be assembled vnder his faith and word, they will not henceforth feare to send their embassadors and deputies, as being assured that every one may come safely: that with all liberty they shall be receiued vnto a free debating of their reasons and declarations, and to lay open whatsoeuer the imaginations of their mindes in matter of religion, without any feare of molestation in their liues and persons. For what Prince was there euer more carefull of his faith then the King? With his enemies haue and daily do relie thereupon, shal not his friends do the like? But withall it is meete that the said nations together with their embassadors and deputies, considering that it is the honoz and glozy of God, the quiet and saluation of their soules, and the peace and vniou of the vniuersall Church that is to be dealt in, should be admonished, laying aside all affections and particular passions, all couetousnes, ambition, bitterness and obstinacy, to come and bring to the said assembly milde and tractable mindes, easie to be illuminated and guided by the light of Gods word, together with the authoritie of the doctrine of the ancient councels and fathers of the Church, and to the same effect,



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fect, before they enter into matter and conference, they are to meete and agree vpon such authoꝛs and booke as they will accept to be the arbitratoꝛs and iudges of their controuersies.

Who doubteth any longer of taking this course? What spirit of strife will not lende his consent hereto? Who is so great an enemy to himselfe, and to the whole name of Christianitie, as to chuse warre and temporall weapons rather then spirituall? The controuersie is spirituall, let it be decided with spiritual weapons? I am content to beleue that we al do agree herein, reason so requireth, necessitie forceth. And I hope that God who with his holy grace and prouidence guides al things, will fauour the bowes and hearty supplications which daily for the same we do and still will poure forth vnto him.

I haue already shewed that the peace of this realme must proceed of the holding of this said generall councell, as also it will be impossible to attain to the one without the other: it shall not be amisse therefore in few words to say, that though peace, matter of religion must be staied by prouiso vntil the resolution of what soeuer shall be agreed, decided and concluded in the saide generall councell. It is an vsuall course to knitte againe a threde in the same place where it was broken: and when an Instrument of Musicke is out of tune, men vse not so to breake the rest of the strings, but by wresting and slacking of them, to reduce them to a consent and harmony as wel as they may. Euen so may peace be knit againe, and the harmony of this estate be restored in the place where it was broken. And this may be compassed by reestablishing things into the same state wherein they were when the Leaguers thzough their manifest conspiracies, commotions, and practises, forced the late king to reuoke the Edict that had preserved and maintained vs seauen yeares on a rowe in happie peace, concord, and tranquillitie throughout the realme.

To conclude therefore, in so much as the Leaguers intent in seeming to wish the king would become a catholike, is wicked and captious, as we haue already shewed, also that the intents of others that terme themselves the kings seruants, and make the like wish, are not so wel grounded, but that they may be reuerfed by other as strong reasons, as may appere by such as already haue



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Being debated, let vs hereafter cease this importunate and common proposition and principle, and henceforth suspect all such as shall use it, accounting them for such, as under a faire and large apparance and pretence doe weare. I wrote not what ambitious and pernicious web, to the disadvantage of the wealth and service of the king, and the peace of his estate. And contrariwise, taking the king at his word, that he will be instructed, and conform himselfe to whatsoener shall be decided and determined in a generall counsell, let vs stand upon this latter aduise, whereby procuring the kings instruction and conuersion, by the saide generall counsell we may reunite the church of God into one selfe religion and confession of faith, which is the greatest benefit that we can at this present craue of our Lord, who wil grant our request, in case our owne commodities and particular interestes be forgotten and omitted, we seeke onely his honour and glory, together with the peace and vniion of all christendome.

**FINIS.**





